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ABSTRACT

Experiences of Filipino women in Hawaii are examined with regard to participation in the Hawaiian work force and retention of Filipino ethnicity. Ethnicity is interpreted to include a sense of identity and consciousness based on common history, culture, and territorial origin as well as race, nationality, and color. The document is presented in four sections. Section I presents background information on Filipino women and characterizes them as one of the most recent Hawaiian racial and ethnic groups. Section II presents a historical perspective on immigration of Filipinos and offers explanations for the predominantly male Filipino migration of plantation workers before 1920. Section III examines the current socioeconomic status of Filipino women in Hawaii. In 1970, 55% of Filipino women working in Hawaii were employed in clerical and service occupations. Many Filipino professional women are unable to find suitable employment in Hawaii and proceed to the mainland where they think the job situation is not as tight. Section IV presents findings from a questionnaire on ethnicity and immigrant status of 30 Filipino women. Problems most often identified by respondents included lack of jobs, underemployment, culture shock, language barriers, and lack of access to social services. The conclusion is that additional research should be undertaken on pioneering Filipino women in Hawaii, on women of Filipino background who are part of the Hawaiian work force, and on second generation Hawaii-born Filipinos. (DB)

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# FILIPINO IMMIGRANT WOMEN IN HAWAII: AN OVERVIEW

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## Introduction

The great racial diversity in the state of Hawaii makes it a particularly suitable and interesting place for the study of minority women. In addition to the indigenous Hawaiian women, a continuous stream of women from other races and cultures, mostly from Asia and the Pacific, has come to settle in great numbers in Hawaii since the early 1800's. Today no less than ten racial and ethnic groups make up the female population in Hawaii, i.e., Hawaiian, Caucasian, Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Puerto Rican, Portuguese, Polynesian, Filipino, and Black. The number of "hapa" (mixed blood) women is also increasing. Altogether women constitute 48 percent of the total population of Hawaii as of 1970.

Of these various diverse groups, the Filipino women were one of the last to come to Hawaii and are thus relatively recent in the local scene compared to their Asian counterparts such as the Chinese, Japanese, and Koreans. Filipinas started to come in significant numbers only in the 1920's and 1930's mostly as plantation wives and family members. They came mostly from the far-flung barrios (villages) of the Ilokano provinces in northern Philippines although many also came from the Visayas region in the central part of the country. "Like their sisters before them from China, Japan, and Portugal, these early Filipinas sprang, almost without exception, from peasant stock, with very little or no formal education."[1]

This paper is about the Filipino immigrant women experience in Hawaii and will be largely preliminary and exploratory in nature. It seeks to address some major concerns related to the history and distribution in the labor force of these women in Hawaii as well as larger questions concerning ethnicity and its various dimensions. On this broad basis, the paper seeks to: a) provide an historical perspective of the migration of Filipino women to Hawaii; 2) explore their participation in the Hawaii work force over time; and c) identify

and examine major issues related to their ethnicity or "cultural baggage" as Filipino women. The main sources of information for this paper are written materials on Filipinos in Hawaii, census statistics, and the responses to a questionnaire sent to a small sample of Filipino women who emigrated to Hawaii in recent decades.

For purposes of this paper, two concepts need to be defined and explained. The term "immigrant" is defined by immigration law as a foreign-born person who has been legally admitted to the United States and has been a permanent resident for five years or less. After five years as a permanent resident alien, an immigrant becomes eligible for American citizenship. The naturalization process usually includes a written examination and oral interview by immigration authorities. We are using "immigrant" in this paper to refer not only to those who have been admitted as permanent residents but also to those who have become naturalized American citizens. The feeling of being an immigrant does not cease with the acquisition of American citizenship. The main distinction that is made here is between immigrant (foreign-born) and American- or local-born Filipino women. This paper does not include the latter except briefly in the section on the labor force where immigrant and local-born women are combined in the same statistics.

The concept of "ethnicity" also needs some elaboration since it has been subject to an infinite number of definitions.[2] Because we are talking primarily of Filipino women, the fact "of being Filipino" is central to our use of the term. It is more than just race, nationality, or color. It is a broader definition which essentially includes a sense of basic identity and consciousness that is shared with others on the basis of a common history, culture, and territorial origin. The current phenomenon of "Roots" probably sharpens our basic definition of ethnicity not only for this study but for all others concerned with this question. Thus, for Filipino women in Hawaii, their ethnicity is

not indicated by preference for Filipino food, music, costume, and other outward trappings, although these could be important symbols. It is something that can or should be traced back to deeper and earlier origins in Malay culture and historical forces in the Philippines that have shaped what we can generalize today as a Filipino national consciousness. Ethnicity is not an "in-group" feeling but a positive force that cuts or should cut across regional, linguistic, religious, and other differences.

Historical Perspective

The Filipinos were the last Asian group to come to Hawaii in great numbers to work as contract labor in the sugar and pineapple plantations.[3] Between 1907 and 1946 when the last group of contract labor arrived, nearly 126,000 Filipinos had been recruited by the Hawaiian Sugar Planters Association (HSPA). They were mostly young, single males. After 1946, Filipinos continued to come in large numbers, no longer as plantation laborers but as dependents of families of the earlier immigrants, professionals, non-farm or urban workers, technicians, etc. The liberalization of immigration laws in 1965 to allow the entry of more immigrants on a seven-preference system accelerated the influx of Filipinos into the state and by 1970, they had become the third largest ethnic minority in Hawaii, next only to the Caucasians and Japanese. Filipinos have been the largest and fastest-growing single immigrant group coming to Hawaii in recent years. From 1970 to 1975, for instance, 23,404 Filipinos were admitted in the state as permanent residents, according to annual reports of Hawaii's Immigration Service Center. This constitutes 55.4% of the total immigrant alien population in Hawaii for that period, which is considerably higher than the second highest group - Koreans at 14%. Currently, there are approximately 80,000 Filipinos residing in Honolulu and its environs, the largest concentration of Filipinos in America. Nationally, it is estimated that there will be one million Filipinos by 1980, outnumbering both the Chines-

and Japanese populations in this country. In the case of Hawaii, it is reasonable to conclude that Filipino immigration will continue at a high level since immigration patterns show that new migrants settle in areas where the same or a similar ethnic community already exists. [4] The high fertility rate noted among Filipinos in Honolulu will contribute to this trend.

Where do the Filipino women fit into this overall picture of migration from the Philippines to Hawaii? There is no written work on this particular area and very little information is provided by the literature on the Filipino experience in the United States. However, one can put together some historical patterns regarding the movement of Filipinas to Hawaii from existing sources.

Unlike other immigrant groups who came to Hawaii earlier such as the Chinese, Japanese, and Portuguese, the Filipinos arrived without their women. The first group of Filipinos recruited by HSPA in 1906 was made up entirely of males. This "male trip" would continue for many years and even when the women started to come, their numbers were so few relative to the increasingly large Filipino male plantation community. The scarcity of Filipino women was a major problem in the Filipino community up until the 1950's. The table below shows the disproportionately unequal sex ratio between Filipino men and women as they arrived during the first half of this century.

TABLE I
FILIPINOS GOING TO HAWAII THROUGH HSPA
1909 - 1946

| YEAR | MEN | WOMEN | RATIO (M/W) | CHILDREN | TOTAL |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1909 | 554 | 57 | 8:1 | 28 | 639 |
| 1910 | 2,653 | 169 | 16:1 | 93 | 2,915 |
| 1911 | 1,363 | 173 | 8:1 | 74 | 1,610 |
| 1912 | 4,319 | 553 | 8:1 | 362 | 5,234 |
| 1913 | 3,258 | 573 | 6:1 | 351 | 4,182 |
| 1914 | 1,848 | 360 | 5:1 | 228 | 2,436 |
| 1915 | 1,363 | 238 | 6:1 | 185 | 1,786 |
| 1916 | 1,674 | 141 | 12:1 | 134 | 1,949 |
| 1917 | 2,536 | 182 | 14:1 | 210 | 2,928 |
| 1918 | 2,196 | 298 | 7:1 | 395 | 2,889 |
| 1919 | 2,642 | 312 | 9:1 | 278 | 3,232 |
| 1920 | 3,030 | 232 | 13:1 | 181 | 3,443 |
| 1921 | 3,982 | 434 | 9:1 | 240 | 4,656 |
| 1922 | 8,513 | 704 | 12:1 | 457 | 9,674 |
| 1923 | 4,830 | 1,482 | 3:1 | 787 | 7,099 |
| 1924 | 4,915 | 1,414 | 3:1 | 648 | 6,977 |
| 1925 | 9,934 | 459 | 22:1 | 252 | 10,645 |
| 1926 | 3,960 | 121 | 33:1 | 96 | 4,177 |
| 1927 | 8,976 | 95 | 95:1 | 88 | 9,158 |
| 1928 | 10,508 | 193 | 55:1 | 156 | 10,857 |
| 1929 | 6,971 | 152 | 46:1 | 186 | 7,309 |
| 1930 | 6,904 | 177 | 39:1 | 291 | 7,372 |
| 1931 | 5,597 | 217 | 26:1 | 200 | 6,014 |
| 1932 | 953 | 151 | 6:1 | 122 | 1,226 |
| 1933 | 9 | 22 | 1:2 | 10 | 41 |
| 1934 | 25 | 43 | 1:2 | 39 | 107 |
| 1946 | 6,000 | 446 | 14:1 | 915 | 7,361 |
| TOTAL | 109,513 | 9,398 | 12:1 | 7,006 | 125,917 |

Source: Based on HSPA files as compiled by Sister Mary Dorita, Filipino Immigration to Hawaii (Unpublished M.A. Thesis, University of Hawaii, June 1954) p. 131.

The male-female ratio was so severe it reached a staggering 95 to 1 in 1927 and 55 to 1 the following year. As early as 1910, this abnormal sex imbalance in the Filipino community had become an issue. The Hawaii Board of Immigration Secretary, A.L.C. Atkinson, called attention to this unhealthy ratio saying it was a little "queer" that only single men were being brought in and women were a "minus quantity" among them.[5] This imbalance would later create serious social problems in the Filipino plantation camps. The solitary lives of the single males and the married ones who had left their wives in the Philippines were exploited by panderers who brought in women of ill-repute to the camps. In many cases, Filipinos became victims of prostitutes who made off with their hard-earned savings. Alcantara notes in his study of one plantation that there were incidents of "coboy-coboy" (wife abduction) which discouraged Filipinos from sending for their wives.[6] Finally, a high crime rate was noted among Filipinos with sexual or money problems.[7] For many Filipino workers, it was not till they were advanced in age or retired that they married. Some had to go to the Philippines to pick out their brides, usually young girls twenty or thirty years their junior. It has also been noted that out-marriage was much more common among Filipino men in the past than recently, probably as a result of the high sex ratios that prevailed several decades ago.[8]

Sister Mary Dorita in her study on Filipino immigration to Hawaii cites that the reasons given by HSPA officials for the refusal or reluctance of Filipino women to emigrate were: their natural timidity, their belief that the Catholic Church was not established in Hawaii, and the fear that if they did come to the Territory, they would be without the consolations of their religion.[9] This could have been the opinion of a few women at the time but it is a bit difficult to believe on the whole. The people in the Ilokos region

where the HSPA was doing most of its recruiting were well-known for their migrating and pioneering spirit. Ilokano families at this time had been moving to other parts of the Philippines, even to non-Christian and unsettled areas in Mindanao and Cagayan Valley where established religion certainly would be absent. Why would religion all of a sudden become a problem in the migration to Hawaii? It did not seem logical.

It is more reasonable to assume that the main motivations of HSPA agents in recruiting Filipino labor for the booming Hawaii plantations precluded the importation of women on a large scale. They were looking for cheap labor to work long hours in the fields and the ideal workers would be young, unmarried Filipino males. Women were not part of the plan. In this connection, it is instructive to inform the reader of the various recruiting practices that HSPA employed to import Filipino labor which created a considerable amount of tension especially in the Philippines.

It was reported that HSPA was recruiting mostly youngsters without the permission of their parents, forcibly loading men into waiting steamers, making unauthorized promises, and signing people up under false names.[10] They also selected men with rural backgrounds and low education. "They had to be uneducated and illiterate. It was felt by the management that it would be easier to handle this type of person and, therefore, less troublesome than the Japanese."[11] A newspaperman wrote that the HSPA recruited only those who could not read or write and with great potential to conform.[12] One technique that the recruiters reportedly used was to feel the palms of the potential recruit and if they were rough and hard, that meant he was used to working in the fields and would be a suitable candidate. Thus, it was not really the reluctance of the Filipino women to leave that was at issue. It was simply that the conditions and preferences laid down by the HSPA required the recruitment of young, single Filipino males. Those who were married had to leave their families

behind and this separation was to last many years. It was not until 1965 that immigration restrictions were relaxed to allow reuniting families.

Thus, from 1909 to 1950, relatively few women came from the Philippines to settle in Hawaii. It was only during 1923 and 1924 that nearly 3,000 women came with their menfolk to the plantations. They were mostly Ilokano women from the northern provinces of Abra, Ilokos Norte, Ilokos Sur, La Union, Pangasinan, and Cagayan. Still their numbers were disproportionately small in relation to the male population.

The years between 1950 and 1970 saw dramatic changes in the Filipino community in the United States. Smith attributes this to "the coming to maturity of Filipino-born Americans and the influx of a 'second wave' of migrants, men and women with different origins, a new profile of personal characteristics, quite different motivations, and different geographic areas of destination."[13] A great number of the new wave of Filipino migrants are professionals and skilled individuals whose immediate destination in America is an urban area. The days of the predominantly male plantation migration are over. The sex ratio was also redressed quickly due in part to the normal sex-ratio among American-born Filipinos and the fact that the second wave of migrants was more balanced in its composition from pioneering single males to whole families.[14] By 1970, the Honolulu sex ratio climbed to almost normal proportions at 3 men to 2 women - a far cry from the 20 to 1 ratios in plantation days. Most of the Filipino women coming in recent times are doctors, nurses, medical technologists, teachers, secretaries, clerks, and urban workers.

As to the overall role of the pioneering immigrant women from the Philippines in Hawaii's history, a local-born Filipina sums it up this way:

> These were the pioneer women of another age, from the Philippines, who dared to venture into an unknown future in another land. Most of them lived in obscurity, and many of them have since passed on.... But their willingness and capacity to endure the drudgery and the

> hardships and uncertainties of plantation life in those earlier years are as much a part of the history of Hawaii's social and economic progress as their menfolk's contributions have been. They brought with them to Hawaii the customs of their homeland, and the best of their traditions have become part of the cultural mixture that is the beauty and strength of Hawaii.[15]

The current socio-economic status of Filipino women in Hawaii is examined in the next section. The major factor analyzed here is their distribution in the state's labor force. This section as mentioned earlier includes both immigrant and local-born Filipino women or, to use another terminology, American women of Filipino ancestry.

Labor Force Participation

One of the most dramatic features of the changing labor force in the United States has been the sharp and steady increase of female participation in recent decades. In 1974, single women constituted 57% of the labor force, married, 43%, divorced or separated, 73%, and widowed, 25%.[16] Contributing greatly to this expansion of the female work force has been the rapid participation of married women which nearly tripled from the 1940's to the 1970's.

There has also been a significant increase in the participation of ethnic and minority women in the civilian labor force especially since the 1960's. For instance, only 36% of Filipino women in the United States were in the 1960 work force but in 1970, this figure rose to 55%, the highest nationally for any group of women.[17] The number of Filipino wives working in 1960 constituted only 9% but in 1970, 46% of them were in the labor force. Another major finding is that 27% of the Filipino women in the labor force are college graduates which is higher than any other group of women.[18] All these impressive figures, of course, should not mislead the reader into concluding that Filipino women have "made it" in America. This is far from being the case as seen from the fact that among Asian-Americans in the 1970's, Filipinos, both men and women, had the highest unemployment rate and that only 5% of the Filipino women nationally made $10,000 or over which is considered pitifully

small for a group having the highest percentage of college graduates among the various groups. This could only mean that a great majority of Filipino professional women in America are either underemployed or underpaid.

Hawaii has the distinction of being the highest among the states in terms of percentage of working women, 16 years and over.[19] It has 49% of such women, followed by Nevada (47%), North Carolina (46.5%), Alaska (46.2%), and Connecticut (45.6%). The high cost of living in this state is usually given as the main reason for the great number of working women. The husband's income is usually not sufficient to meet his family's economic and other needs.

The following discussion will explore the growth and distribution of the Filipino female labor force in Hawaii since 1950. Occasionally, there will be comparisons with Filipino women in other parts of the United States as well as with other ethnic or minority women in Hawaii.

Paralleling the U.S. experience, the growth of Filipino women in the civilian labor force in Hawaii has been rapid and steady. As shown in the table below, only 22.8% of Filipino women in the state, 14 years and over, were in the labor force in 1950. By 1960, this increased to 31.8%, up by 9% over 1950. In 1970, the figure rose to 44.3% which means an increase of 12.5% over 1960 and 21.5% over 1950. This is significantly higher and faster than both the Chinese and Japanese female force which increased only 13.8 % and 7.1%, respectively, in 1970, compated to 21.5% for the Filipino women. Compared to the growth of the whites in the labor force, the Filipino rate is even higher. The white women rate actually declined by 1.9% from 1950 to 1960 and increased by only 8.9%from 1960 to 1970, compared to the Filipino rate of 12.5% for the same period. There is no doubt that more and more Filipinas are being absorbed by the Hawaii work force at a faster and higher rate than their counterparts in this state.

The big question is, what do these figures mean other than being impressive arithmetic increases? It is probably more important to know <u>where</u> the

TABLE II
FEMALE PARTICIPATION RATES IN THE CIVILIAN LABOR FORCE, 14 YEARS AND OLDER
STATE OF HAWAII

| TOTAL OF | 1950 | | | 1960 | | | 1970 | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Population | # in Labor Force | % | Population | # in Labor Force | % | Population | # in Labor Force | % |
| ALL RACES | 92,077 | 34,442 | 37.4 | 162,313 | 65,373 | 40.3 | 231,433 | 108,212 | 46.8 |
| WHITES | 27,496* | 8,898* | 32.4 | 59,809 | 18,251 | 30.5 | 97,580* | 38,469* | 39.4 |
| JAPANESE | 49,056 | 20,506 | 41.8 | 74,618 | 36,503 | 48.9 | 88,129 | 48,113 | 54.6 |
| CHINESE | 10,148 | 3,814 | 37.6 | 13,290 | 5,983 | 45.0 | 19,475 | 10,006 | 51.4 |
| FILIPINOS | 5,379 | 1,224 | 22.8 | 14,596 | 4,636 | 31.8 | 26,249 | 11,624 | 44.3 |

* 1950 figures for Caucasians only.

Sources:
1) 1950 Census of Population, V. II, Characteristics of the Population, pts. 51-54, Territories and Possessions.
2) 1960 Census of Population, V. I, Characteristics of the Population, pt. 13 - Hawaii.
3) 1960 Census of Population, PC(2)-1C, Non-White Population by Race.
4) 1970 Census of Population, V. I, Characteristics of the Population, pt. 13 - Hawaii.
5) 1970 Census of Population, PC(2)-1G, Japanese, Chinese and Filipinos in the U.S.

Filipino women are distributed in whole economic structure of Hawaii. Numbers are important but it is equally important, if not more, to know what they are doing. Using a comparative framework again, we have drawn up the following table to show the distribution of Filipino women in the Hawaii labor force based on 1970 statistics.

TABLE III
OCCUPATION OF EMPLOYED PERSONS (FEMALE ONLY) BY MINORITY STATUS
STATE OF HAWAII, 1970
(in %)

| OCCUPATION | Hawaii Total | Filipino | Japanese | Chinese | White |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Professional/ Technical | 17.1 | 7.9 | 15.9 | 19.1 | 22.7 |
| Managers (exc. farm) | 4.9 | 2.1 | 4.3 | 5.5 | 6.4 |
| Sales Workers | 9.1 | 8.0 | 9.1 | 9.1 | 10.5 |
| Clerical/Kindred | 33.4 | 25.0 | 34.6 | 37.1 | 35.0 |
| Craftworkers and Kindred | 1.7 | 1.9 | 1.8 | 1.9 | 1.3 |
| Operatives, incl. transport | 8.0 | 14.5 | 9.9 | 8.0 | 3.2 |
| Laborers (except farm) | 0.9 | 1.6 | 0.7 | 1.0 | 0.6 |
| Farm Laborers | 1.2 | 5.0 | 1.2 | 0.5 | 0.2 |
| Farm Managers | 0.4 | 0.3 | 0.7 | 0.1 | 0.2 |
| Service Workers | 21.4 | 32.8 | 19.6 | 16.9 | 18.1 |
| Private Household Workers | 1.7 | 1.9 | 2.3 | 0.9 | 1.7 |
| TOTAL | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |

SOURCE: State of Hawaii, Department of Labor and Industrial Relations, March 1977. Based on 1970 Census of Population.

Some of the highlights of the above table are worth pointing out. Two major occupational groupings employ vast numbers of Filipino working women in Hawaii, i.e., clerical (25%) and services (33%) for a total of 55%. The clerical group is slightly lower than either Chinese, Japanese, ot whites, but there are far more service workers among Filipinas than any other group. This means that there is some degree of mobility of Filipinas into the lower levels of white-collar occupations in he state but a substantial majority consists of urban blue-collar workers in the modern plantations - hotels, restaurants, department stores, factories, etc.- doing mostly unskilled jobs. Salesworkers are also growing in number relative to the other groups being referred to in this discussion.

There is also a greater number of operatives (14.5%) such as skilled and semi-skilled machine workers compared to the Japanese, Chinese, and whites. Rapid developments in industries in this state call for skills that Filipino women are able to fill. Filipinas also outpace others in farm labor suggesting that there are still quite a few working at the plantations and rural areas. The mechanization of many of the plantations, of course, has reduced the demand for labor-intensive employment but many Filipino women still prefer to work there. Non-farm labor also employs more Filipinas than any of the other groups mentioned in the table.

A distinct finding in this study is the low percentage of Filipino women employed in professional and technical occupations- barely 8%. This is much lower compared to other ethnic women in Hawaii and to other Filipino women in the United States as a whole. It is also half the national average of 16% for professional women. The following table shows the percentage of Filipino women holding professional jobs in selected areas of the United States:

Table 4

FILIPINO WOMEN IN PROFESSIONAL OCCUPATIONS

| State | Filipino Women in the United States | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | % in Labor Force | % Foreign-born | % Working in Professions |
| Hawaii | 48 | 27 | 8 |
| Washington | 52 | 52 | 18 |
| California | 55 | 55 | 21 |
| New York | 71 | 73 | 56 |
| Illinois | 77 | 78 | 64 |

Source: 1970 Census of Population. Subject Reports: Japanese,Chinese, and Filipinos in the United States, PC (2) - 1G.

Here we can make a generalization that foreign-born Filipino women tend to acquire professional status more readily than local-born ones. Most of the recent immigrant women from the Philippines are already professionals when they come which gives them an initial advantage in looking for jobs. They have also already acquired the basic education for further training in various specialized fields. These women flock to the U.S. mainland rather than to Hawaii which probably explains the low figure for professional Filipino women in this state. It is generally felt that more chances for mobility and advancement are on the mainland rather than Hawaii. Employment restrictions in Hawaii regarding citizenship, residency, and professional requirements have also discouraged Filipino professionals from settling permanently in Hawaii. Many of these restrictions have been declared unconstitutional and discriminatory and some have been lifted. A landmark case which had implications for future Filipino employment was that of Victoria Domingo, an immigrant from the Philippines, who sued the city and county of Honolulu following her dismissal as an outreach worker on the ground that she was not an

American citizen. The judge ruled in her favor and was subsequently reinstated.

However, there are still professional or licensing requirements such as passing a state examination or possessing an American degree that effectively limit Filipino professionals, including women, from practising their professions in Hawaii. As a result, many professionals coming from the Philippines are overqualified or unsuited for the jobs they now hold . Some of them proceed to the mainland where they think the job situation is not as tight.

A further discussion involving views of Filipino professional women on matters such as employment and discrimination are presented later in this paper.

Filipino Women and Ethnicity

This section presents the major findings of an open-ended questionnaire sent to 45 Filipino immigrant women respondents residing in Honolulu on various issues related to ethnicity and their immigrant status. Thirty (30) respondents returned the questionnaire representing 2/3 of the intended sample. This number is, of course, too small to be representative of the whole Filipino immigrant women community in Hawaii and the findings of this survey should be treated as suggestive rather than conclusive.

Of the 30 respondents, more than half (17) hold Master's degrees, 7 finished a Bachelor's degree, 2 are doctors of medicine, and 4 are Ph.D.'s. All but two obtained undergraduate degrees from various universities and colleges in the Philippines and exactly half (15) came to the United States as graduate students with scholarships or financial support from American universities and institutions such as Ford, Rockefeller, Fulbright, East-West Center, etc. It is a highly-educated sample coming mostly from the 31 to 45 age range. They now hold a variety of jobs as university instructors or administrators, school teachers, social and community workers, planners,

researchers, counselors, physicians, medical technologists, writers, curriculum developers, office staff, etc. One has a religious vocation, another is a curator, and one other is a psychologist. This mix represents a good cross-section of the professions. Only two are unemployed and all but four arrived in the United States after 1961. A majority of them came originally from the Greater Manila area and Ilokos provinces in the Philippines.

When asked what the main problems are facing Filipino immigrant women in Hawaii, majority mentioned lack of jobs and unemployment as the major problems. Jobs are usually not available for the preparation and training they had undergone previously mainly because of the tight economic situation and the state and professional requirements mentioned earlier. It is only after undergoing a period of local training or going back to school that they can be considered for the jobs they are seeking. For instance, one respondent mentioned that it was the graduate degree she acquired in an American university and not her Philippine degree which was considered by her employer. Doctors, dentists, lawyers, teachers, and health workers are the hardest hit with these requirements. Teachers trained in the Philippines have extreme difficulty getting certification to teach in Hawaii's public schools. As far as can be ascertained, fewer than five immigrant women from the Philippines have been able to get "certificated" jobs in the public school system. The net result is that professional women often have to take on clerical and other menial jobs that do not require a college education. And it is here that the "double-bind" works to their disadvantage because they are considered "overqualified" for these jobs and hence are turned down. It is noted in many cases that immigrant women with certain technical skills who run beauty or sewing shops or are employed as craftsworkers in industry are better off, income-wise, than professionals. This inability to land suitable jobs, lack of training for newly-arrived women, the possession of the wrong skills and lack of the

right ones all lead to conditions of unemployment or underemployment. This is aggravated by competition with other ethnic groups which is also mentioned as a problem facing immigrant women.

Two other problems were prominently mentioned, i.e. "culture shock" and "the language barrier." Adjustment to "American ways" and conflicting values between American and Filipino or local and immigrant culture was mentioned 18 times while 10 mentioned the language problem. Obviously, the two are related since adjustment could be hampered greatly by poor command of English or by inability to communicate effectively. Some of the elements of Filipino culture such as the closeness of the family, the availability of other "support systems" provided by the extended family, friends, domestic help, etc., and the more stable relationships with friends, children, and spouses are missed by a good number of the respondents. Western values are seen as undermining family values. This range of problems generally results in social, psychological, and financial problems in varying degrees. A sense of being uprooted, dislocated, and alienated is consequently felt by some. One respondent also noted the great number of educated Filipinas marrying outside of their race, mainly to Caucasians, and the problem seems to be "the limited number of well-educated single Filipino men in Hawaii." There is a slight touch of amusing irony here since the major problem only a while back was the shortage of Filipino women in Hawaii.

Other major problems mentioned by a fewer number of respondents are the lack of educational opportunities for and discipline over children, expectations that working women have successful home lives as well, exploitation in work situations, lack of access to social services, and discrimination.

With regard to discrimination, the respondents were asked if they feel they have been discriminated against in any way on account of their race, sex, or both. More than half (17) answered "No," 10 said "Yes," and 3 were

"not sure." Most of the "no" answers, however, were qualified by such statements as "I'm sure I have been but I never noticed it," "I had the funny feeling I was not being understood," "Not personally but I know of others who have been discriminated against because they are Filipinos," etc. In short, many of the respondents, even if they have not personally experienced discriminatory treatment, expressed reservations about their answers, indicating the possibility that discrimination need not be outwardly manifested. Others who answered "no" attributed their answer to the length of time they have been in Hawaii and the "amount of acculturation" they have developed. They have learned to cope with or ignore situations in which some discrimination may arise.

Those who answered in the affirmative mentioned a wide range of situations from subtle to blatant discrimination. Subtle forms mentioned were "People didn't know what to do with or think of me," "being turned down politely in job opportunities," and "putting more stress on training acquired in an American context." One mentioned getting rotten treatment from a department store by, ironically enough, women themselves. The blatant forms mentioned were lower ranks and salaries compared to other ethnic groups while holding the same if not higher qualifications, and being fired from jobs. Jovita Zimmerman who was not renewed for a teaching job in a community college believes that her "refusal to conform to the stereotype that Filipinos are subordinate or disadvantaged has worked against me." The most extreme form of discrimination mentioned by one respondent happened not in Hawaii but in a midwest state where her American husband had taken her to meet his family. She was met with signs reading "Get niggers out of neighborhood."

In a related question, the respondents were asked if being immigrant women has helped them, hindered them, or does not make any difference in work or other situations. Eight answered being immigrant women has helped them because they have bilingual skills which allow them to function more

effectively in job situations involving immigrants and minority groups. Also, being immigrant and woman is an asset because of the present-day emphasis on minority and women's rights. Being Filipino has also helped Dr. Amy Jacang because her medical practice involves a clientele of 80% Filipinos. Six said being immigrant women hindered them especially in terms of qualifying for the jobs that they applied for. A greater number, 12, said their ethnicity "does not make any difference." Most of them feel that what matters most is education and the right training and background for a job. One answer mentioned having capitalized "on my being immigrant Filipina to work on community concerns." Hawaii has a great number of programs, mostly federal, dealing with immigrant communities.

Helen Nagtalon Miller, the foremost American-born Filipina Ph.D. in Hawaii, says that discrimination is not limited to immigrants but applies to local-born minority women as well.[20] She said she was discriminated against quite early in life in ways that were often not recognized as discrimination by people. Throughout her schooling, she was not encouraged to be a doctor, lawyer, engineer, or executive because women were seen fit only for the teaching and nursing professions. When she finished her college education, she could not gain permanency or tenure in her job because she did not have graduate degrees. When she did finally obtain an M.A. and Ph.D. which was much later, the reasons given her for not being hired was the scarcity of jobs. The only reason she got her present job, she said, was that the recruiting committee believed in affirmative action and actively encouraged her to apply. She mentioned that only after federal policies have mandated equal opportunity, affirmative action, and minority programs are there attempts to secure ethnic balance in employment. But "in spite of the federal mandates, many employers ignore affirmative action or play games to circumvent it." In short, the "system" has subtle ways to subvert the original intent of these programs.

Speaking of "the system," the question was asked if it provided ample opportunities for the advancement or upward mobility of immigrant women. The responses were: Yes- 7; No - 15; No response - 2; and Others - 6. There were elaborations to both the "yes" and "no" answers. One "yes" answer said it is not really a matter of the system providing opportunities "so much as it waits to be used. Those who can figure it out best in the context of where they want to go and and what they want to achieve can use it best." By extension, this argument can mean that the system can be manipulated by those who know how. Another said there are ample opportunities only for the professionals who can speak the language better and are capable of high-level work. Finally, a respondent answered in the affirmative but stated that Filipino women must be prepared to put in a lot of effort and dedication. Also, "they should venture out of the comfortableness of their own group and mix with others to understand American society in general and Hawaii in particular."

The negative replies cited some strong arguments. Luvi Hurdus, a multicultural curriculum writer said "one would have to be 'sassy' to advance in this society." Another noted that Filipino women are not given the same opportunities as women from other ethnic groups. Examples are the various training programs in state agencies. This respondent claims that so much is spent for training of professionals from other ethnic extractions but not for Filipinos. Other responses qualifying the "no" answer were: 1) locals are hired first although some highly qualified immigrant women should not have any problem; 2) majority of immigrants lack training equal to the local-born; and 3) the system is hard on immigrants but then it is so on everyone. One woman questioned why qualified Filipinas are not running for public office like the state legislature and hastened to add that there is nothing to hold them back except "probably inertia and private reasons."

Some of the "significant other" responses were: 1) the new affirmative

action programs will hopefully provide opportunities; 2) cannot be either "yes" or "no" but a person who shows great potential will be given opportunity for advancement; and 3) in theory, yes, in actuality, no.

The last set of questions probed the respondents' feelings about their own ethnicity, other immigrant women, and similar concerns. For instance, do they feel that ethnicity is a barrier to adjustment to the larger culture in Hawaii? Do they think immigrant women are comfortable or proud of their ethnicity or do they play it down? What is the role of Filipino women's organizations in dealing with ethnic women's issues?

There were no clear-cut answers to these questions and some of the respondents sidetracked them entirely and indicated other concerns. Twelve responses disagreed in varying degrees to the observation that ethnicity, in this case Filipino cultural behavior, impedes adjustment to society. On the contrary, one said, what Filipinos need right now is "a healthy self-respect to function fully in this society and this is one way of maintaining self-esteem." A similar response was given by a young Filipina who thinks that "ethnicity is important in providing a very basic sense of identity which is the root of self-respect. You've got to make it known, who you are, and why you are where you are." Two others cited that ethnocentrism or the belief that one group is superior to another and not ethnicity is the barrier. Ethnicity is a healthy, positive concept that can in fact facilitate adjustment.

Eight respondents offered ambivalent views which could be summarized this way. In any ethnic group's behavior, there are good ~~and~~ or bad, ^and practical or impractical aspects. They have to be viewed within the context of the larger milieu in which immigrants have settled. The question of context is important because it may have to dictate what aspects of one's ethnicity are appropriate for certain situations. In Hawaii, the larger setting is bicultural, if not multicultural. Accordingly, one modifies (or should anyway) her behavior. One suggested that Filipino women should stop observing the time-honored cul-

tural values of "hiya" (sense of "shame" causing one to be humble and unassertive) and "utang-na-loob" (reciprocity or recognizing a "debt of gratitude") and learn to be more aggressive and assertive. Another, however, said that one can be adaptable without losing her traditional ethnic values.

Only three conceded that ethnicity is a possible barrier especially if we take skin color or language difficulties into consideration. They also suggested that adjustment is a more important consideration but admitted that it would be extremely difficult to diminish one's ethnicity since it will always be there.

Odette Villanueva-King, outspoken Filipina feminist, offered the view that new positive attitudes toward ethnicity and womanhood would enhance compatible development of several cultures within one person. She noted that the cultural traditions of even the earliest immigrants (Northern Europeans) in America are still well-preserved. This is basically supported by Miller who thinks that all immigrants, men and women, must deal with this problem, i.e. that total participation in the affairs of the host culture, in this case Hawaii, can only be possible with being"acculturated" and "multicultural."

The second question asked how Filipino immigrant women feel about their ethnicity. It produced the following results:

1. Proud of it - 11
2. Comfortable with it - 9
3. Conscious of it - 6
4. Ashamed of it - 5
5. No response - 2

The total is more than 30 because some respondents gave multiple responses. The first two categories are similar and in a sense could be lumped together. This was observed to be the case with successful immigrant women who are highly educated, economically secure, and have a strong sense of self-confidence. Those who are conscious of their ethnicity are observed to be "still struggling and

careful in doing their share. Those who were observed to be "ashamed" cited the language problem and having a rural background for feeling so. They feel a sense of inferiority and lack self-confidence.

Some of the respondes also indicated the observation that local-born Filipino women tend to play down their ethnicity more than immigrants. This observation, of course, does not apply to all locals. They are more prone to say that they are Filipino - Spanish, Filipino-Chinese, Filipino-Hawaiian, etc. even if their parents are pure Filipinos. To go into the reasons for this would entail another study and will not be dealt with here. But one respondent offered an insight that could explain this phenomenon. It is that "local-born Filipino women have for so long been treated like second-class citizens in this state and country that they identify themselves as being non-Filipino. The immigrant Filipinas, on the other hand, especially the recent educated ones, are quite used to being primary citizens in their own land and have no fear at all of being identified as Filipino." It may be said in this connection that there is a strong tendency on the part of local-born Filipino children to deny or downplay their Filipino heritage.

Over the years a number of Filipino women's organizations have sprang up in Hawaii for a variety of purposes ranging from mutual help to cultural enrichment. Some of these organizations have been in existence for the past 20 or 25 years. Twenty of the respondents indicated some familiarity with the activities of these organizations and majority said that they are still pre-occupied with beauty contests and traditional "balls." A few, however, mentioned some justifications for these activities such as the scholarship and community programs that are funded from the proceeds of these contests. The Filipino Women's League is especially cited as being the most service-oriented. It has projects on scholarships, the elderly, the youth, ~~home and visits,~~ and visits to care homes. It also sponsors a well-attended Filipino cooking show annually. There is general distaste for the "terno" and "Maria

Clara" balls that two women's organizations sponsor annually because they are relics of a Spanish colonial past that is resented by many Filipinos. Maria Clara, for instance, was the tragic, weak 19th century Victorian heroine of Jose Rizal's novels who became the symbol of Filipino womanhood. This is ironical since Rizal really intended her as a caricature of the Filipino woman in Spanish times. She was the anti-thesis of the real Filipino woman who defied Spanish rule and whose roots lie deep in pre-colonial Malay culture.

Conclusion

This paper has dealt with the broad issues related to the history, employment, and ethnicity of Filipino immigrant women in Hawaii. Obviously much more research of a deeper nature is needed to have a fuller understanding of the various factors related to ethnicity, adjustment, and socio-economic status of Filipinas in this state. Three areas of further research would lead to this understanding .

First, the experiences and oral histories of the pioneering Filipino women in Hawaii need to be researched and recorded before they die. Present-day Filipinos in the state only have a vague idea of the old plantation culture. The main contribution of the Filipino women then, according to King who was mentioned earlier, was as plantation co-workers which helped immensely in establishing a psychological and financial stability in plantation society. This is important to emphasize since the literature and discussions of immigration history in Hawaii, being male-dominant, largely understress the role of women.

The second area suggested for further research concerns the current Filipino working women of Hawaii- particularly the more than 80% engaged in services, clerical, sales, crafts, farm, and other similar types of occupation. Then as now, Filipino women continue to labor long hours - faceless, nameless women who continue to shore up the economy of Hawaii which was built by their forbears. How much do we know of them and their conditions as

maids, seamstresses, cooks, waitresses, machinists, janitors, domestic help, etc.?

Finally, the experiences of the second-generation Hawaii-born Filipinas also need exploring. They have had their own share of problems which are probably as seriou as those of their immigrant counterparts . They appear caught in a cultural dilemma - alienated from their ethnic roots and at the same time not really belonging in this land and becoming part of "the American dream." "At least, you know who and where you are," said one local-born Filipina to me one time. "I don't even know who I am and where I'm going."

Much indeed remains to be done if we are to have a richer perception and keener understanding of Filipino women in Hawaii.

## Notes

1. Angie Iranon, "The Contributions of Filipino Women in Hawaii," in Nancy Foon Young and Judy Parrish, eds. Montage (University of Hawaii, General Assistance Center for the Pacific, 1977), p. 97.

2. For a study on the various meanings and definitions of ethnicity, see Wsevolod W. Isajiw, "Definitions of Ethnicity," in Ethnicity, No. 1 (1974), pp. 111-124.

3. For a history of Filipino immigration to Hawaii from 1906 to 1946, see Sister Mary Dorita, B.V.M., Filipino Immigration to Hawaii (Unpublished M.A. thesis, University of Hawaii, June 1954.). See also Bruno Lasker, Filipino Immigration to Continental United States and Hawaii (Chicago, 1931).

4. Immigrants in Hawaii, 1976 (State of Hawaii, Immigrant Services Center, January 1977), p. 9.

5. See Dorita, op. cit., p. 26.

6. See Ruben Alcantara, "Filipino Adaptation in an Hawaiian Setting," (Paper presented at the Conference on International Migration from the Philippines, East-West Center, Honolulu, June 2-6, 1975.)

7. See Roman Cariaga, "The Filipinos in Honolulu," Social Science, No. 10 (January 1935), pp. 39-46.

8. Peter C. Smith, "The Social Demography of Filipino Migrations Abroad," International Migration Review, X, 3 (Fall 1976), p. 343.

9. Dorita, op. cit., citing letter of L.C. Warren to Bishop Libert Boeynoems of Honolulu from Roman Catholic Diocese of Honolulu Chancery Office Files, October 10, 1910.

10. In one incident, HSPA recruiter Oswald Steven and his assistants who had recruited some 100 men in Tacloban, Leyte province were attacked by the townspeople with clubs and sticks until all but 38 of the recruits fled or were carried off by relatives. A similar incident was reported in Cebu, another Visayan province. In another instance, six Filipino youths alleging they had been coerced to sign papers by HSPA agents brought suit in Manila. There was widespread opposition to HSPA recruitment practices both in Manila and in the provinces. See Dorita, op. cit., pp. 23-25.

11. Senator Daniel K. Inouye in a speech before the Hawaii Federation of Teachers. See "Ethnic Problems Need Understanding" by Karen Horton, Honolulu Sunday Star-Bulletin and Advertiser, December 5, 1976, p. J-3.

12. See Gene Hunter, "Hawaii's No Paradise for Filipinos," Honolulu Advertiser, January 11, 1971, p. A-1, A-4.

13. Smith, op. cit., p. 325.

14. Ibid., p. 326.

15. Iranon, op. cit., p. 103.

16. See Juanita Kreps and Robert Clark, Sex, Age, and Work -The Changing Composition

of the Labor Force (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1975), p. 32.

17. A Study of Selected Socio-Economic Characteristics of Ethnic Minorities Based on the 1970 Census, Volume II: Asian-Americans (Department of Health Education, and Welfare, Office of Special Concerns, Washington D.C.,July 1974), p. 84.

18. Ibid., p. 113.

19. 1970 Census of Population, Characteristics of the Population (U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Washington, D.C.).

20. Personal interview with Dr. Helen Nagtalon Miller, December 28, 1977.